

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Douglass Place (Preferred)
and/or common 516-524 South Dallas Street

2. Location

street & number 516-524 South Dallas Street N/A not for publication
city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of congressional district Third
state Maryland code 24 county Independent city code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet #1
street & number
city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of the Circuit Court - Baltimore City
street & number Room #600 Courthouse West - Calvert and Fayette Streets
city, town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no
date 1983 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local
depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle
city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

B-3694

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received

date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Douglass Place
Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 4

Page 1

OWNERS OF PROPERTY

Mr. and Mrs. Manning Moore
516 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Mr. Ron Zimmerman
c/o Von L. Corporation
1234 Light Street (518 South Dallas Street)
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Mr. and Mrs. Gregory V. Stanley
520 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231 (301) 732-4039

Mr. and Mrs. John Smolinski
522 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Mr. and Mrs. Paul D. Brylske
524 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231 (301) 327-7026

7. Description

B-3694

Condition

☐ excellent ☐ deteriorated
☒ good ☐ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Douglass Place is a group of five late-19th-century brick rowhouses located at 516-524 South Dallas Street in the Fell's Point area of Baltimore, Maryland. The buildings are typical of "alley houses" of the period in Baltimore, two narrow bays wide, two stories high over a basement, with shed roofs. Italianate influence is reflected in their segmental-arched window and door openings, and in the simple molded sheet metal cornices which crown the buildings. A white marble placque above the first story of #520 bears the legend "Douglass Place", referring to the group's association with Frederick Douglass, who constructed the buildings about 1892 as rental housing for poor blacks.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Douglass Place is a group of five brick rowhouses located at 516-524 South Dallas Street in the Fell's Point area of Baltimore, Maryland. The houses, constructed about 1892, are Italianate-influenced "alley houses" typical of the period in Baltimore. Fronting directly on the sidewalk, they stand two narrow bays wide and two stories tall above a basement. The five houses share an identical fenestration pattern, with the right bay of the first story holding a transomed entrance, reached by a flight of several steps; a double-hung window, originally holding 1/1 sash, occupies the left bay. On the second story, two somewhat lower sash windows are aligned directly above the first-floor openings. A basement window appears at sidewalk level in the left bay. All openings have segmental-arched heads. The buildings share a common cornice line, embellished with a simple molded sheet metal cornice. The buildings have shed roofs. Number 522 is clad in multicolored Formstone, but the common-bond brick construction is visible in the remaining buildings in the group (although #518 has been painted). A white marble placque above the first story of #520, the central building in the group, bears the legend "Douglass Place." Six-over-six sash windows have been installed at #520, while the other buildings retain their original 1/1 sash. Number 520 retains a colored-glass transom over the entrance.

The first-floor plan comprises three rooms. The entrance opens directly into the living room, which measures approximately 10' x 11'; the dining room, of equal size, lies beyond. A narrow rear extension holds the kitchen and winder stair to the second story. Each first-floor room is served by a stove flue. Decorative trim is simple architrave molding with bull's-eye corner blocks of the period. Some rooms retain pressed-tin ceilings.

8. Significance

B-3694

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1892

Builder/Architect

unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criterion: B

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Douglass Place is significant for its association with Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), famed abolitionist, editor, and statesman. Douglass constructed the five buildings in 1892 as rental housing for poor blacks in the Fells Point area of Baltimore. It is the only known property in the city with this association. The property embodies Douglass' connection with the Fells Point neighborhood, where he had resided from the 1820's to 1838; the site upon which the houses stand was the location of the Dallas Street Station Methodist Episcopal Church, which Douglass had attended while living in the area.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Once owned by Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), famed abolitionist, newspaper editor and statesman of the nineteenth century, these houses, 516 thru 524 South Dallas Street are significant for that association. Evidence indicates Douglass purchased the property in January of 1892 for sentimental reasons. Originally the site of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Dallas Street Station, constructed in 1773, Douglass' attachment to the Dallas Street property is understandable. Douglass attended the meeting house while he lived in Fells Point as a house servant, on and off, from the 1820's to 1838. While quite young, from within the walls of this church, Douglass received encouragement to believe he had a future to be of use in bettering the conditions of blacks. It was this encouragement which proved to be the foundation for his later career and crusade.

Subsequent to the civil war, the black congregation abandoned the church for worship at another location. "The ancient and deserted church was after its abandonment debased to an assembly hall, in which cake walks were held and entertainment given"¹ Douglass, now late in his life, continued to show interest in Fells Point, the place of so many memories during his youth. Douglass purchased the Dallas Street property in 1892 for the amount of eighteen hundred dollars, razed it and "built housing to replace some of the miserable shacks in which Fells Point blacks had lived on Strawberry Alley, now renamed Dallas Street."² The housing project proved not to be a paying proposition. During the economic slump following the panic of 1893, Douglass' Baltimore agent sent him a check for the sum of fifty dollars in rentals but added, because of the stringency of the times, it was hard to collect money here.... Two of the houses were vacant.³

While Douglass was known for his connection with reforms involving blacks, he was always concerned for the betterment of the lot of mankind. In this regard, he was an early supporter of the women's rights movement in this

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland Item number 7 and 10 Page 2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

country. These buildings as a whole constitute one of the oldest, most important structures connected with the black history of Baltimore.

Footnotes

- ¹William M. Marine, Historical Sketches; 130th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Episcopal Church (n.p.: h.p., March 9, 1902), n. pag.
- ²Dickson Preston, Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 170.
- ³Preston, p. 170.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property comprises only the city lots upon which the resources stand. The surrounding area is characterized by dense urban development with buildings of similar scale, materials, and period; however, the five houses which comprise Douglass Place are distinguished from their surroundings by their construction as a unified group identical in form and detailing, and by their specific historical association with Frederick Douglass.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland Item number 9 Page 3

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Deed, Liber J.B. 1378, Folio 99-100, January 20, 1892, Land Records of Baltimore City

Handy, James A. Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History (n.p.: n.p.).

Indianapolis Freeman, January 2, 1892; January 30, 1882.

Marine, William I. Historical Sketches; 130th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Church (n.p.: n.p., March 9, 1902).

Preston, Dickson. Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Wood, Grace. "175th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Church," Baltimore Sun, November 14, 1948.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

10. Geographical DataAcreage of nominated property Less than one acreQuadrangle name Baltimore East, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1,8	3,6,2	3,1,0	4,3	4,9	4,0,0
	Zone	Easting	Northing			

B						
	Zone	Easting	Northing			

C						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

D						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

E						
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F						
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G						
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H						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet #2

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Kerry L. Stanley and Leroy Graham

organization

date March 23, 1983street & number 520 South Dallas Streettelephone (301) 732-4039 or 244-0822city or town Baltimorestate Maryland 21231**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national
 ☐ state
 ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*J. M. H.*8-10-83

title

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

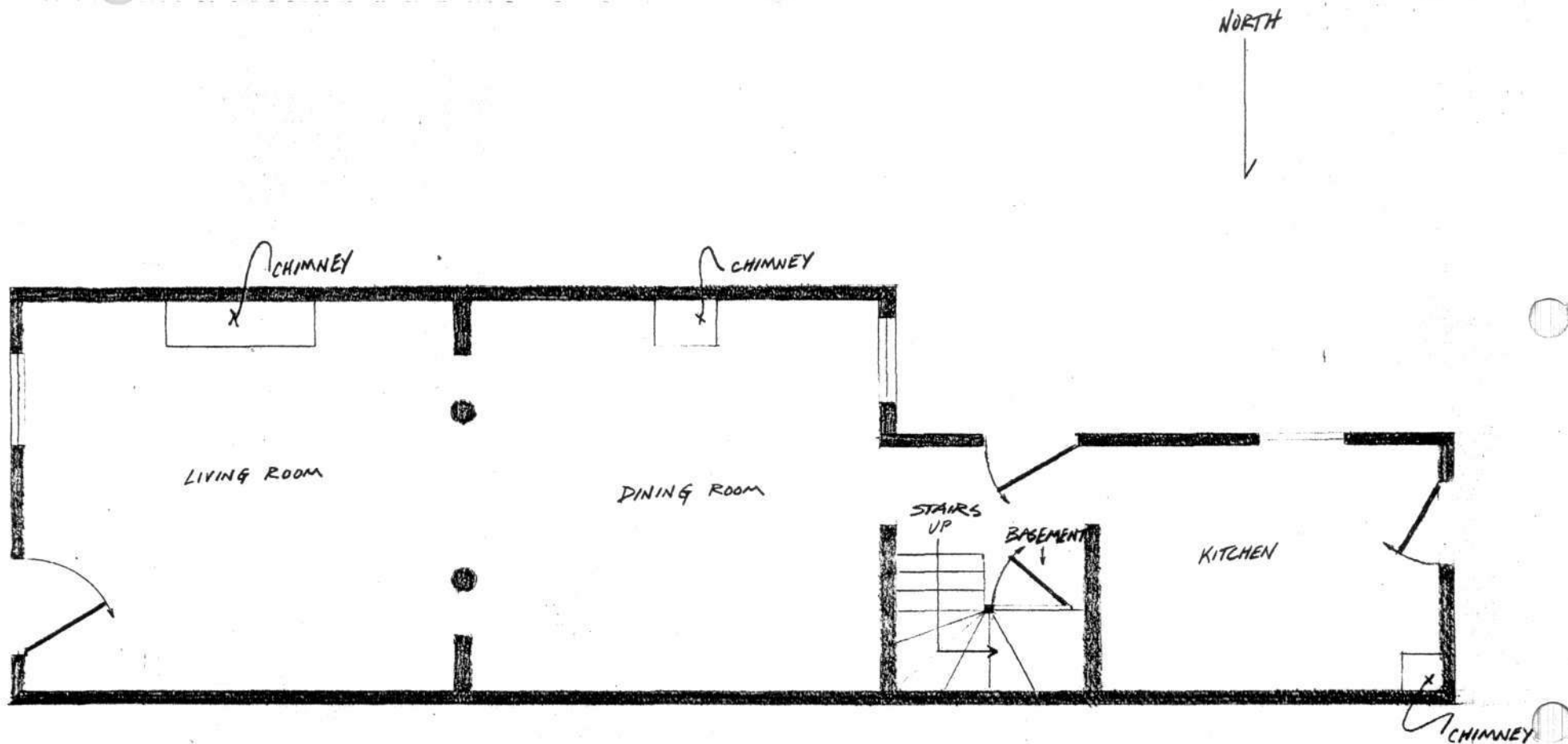
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

4349400





DOUGLASS PLACE

TYPICAL FIRST FLOOR PLAN SCALE $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$

DRAWING SUBMITTED BY GREG STANLEY

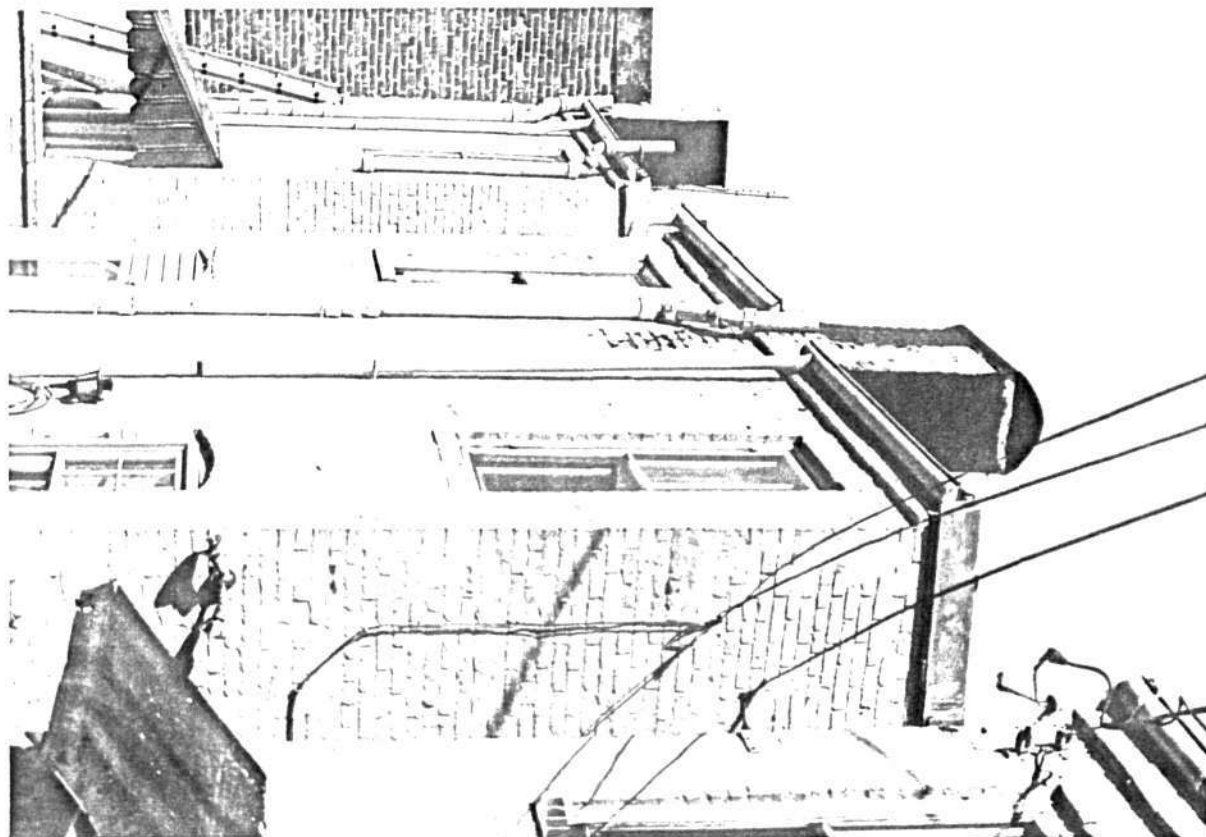


1

Douglass Place B-3694
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore, MD 21231
Douglass Place, east facades
View north from #524 S. Dallas St.
#1 of 7

2

Douglass Place B-3694
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore, MD 21231
View south from #516 S. Dallas St.
#2 of 7



3

Douglass Place B-3694
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore, MD 21231
"Douglass Place" marker, 520 S. Dallas St.

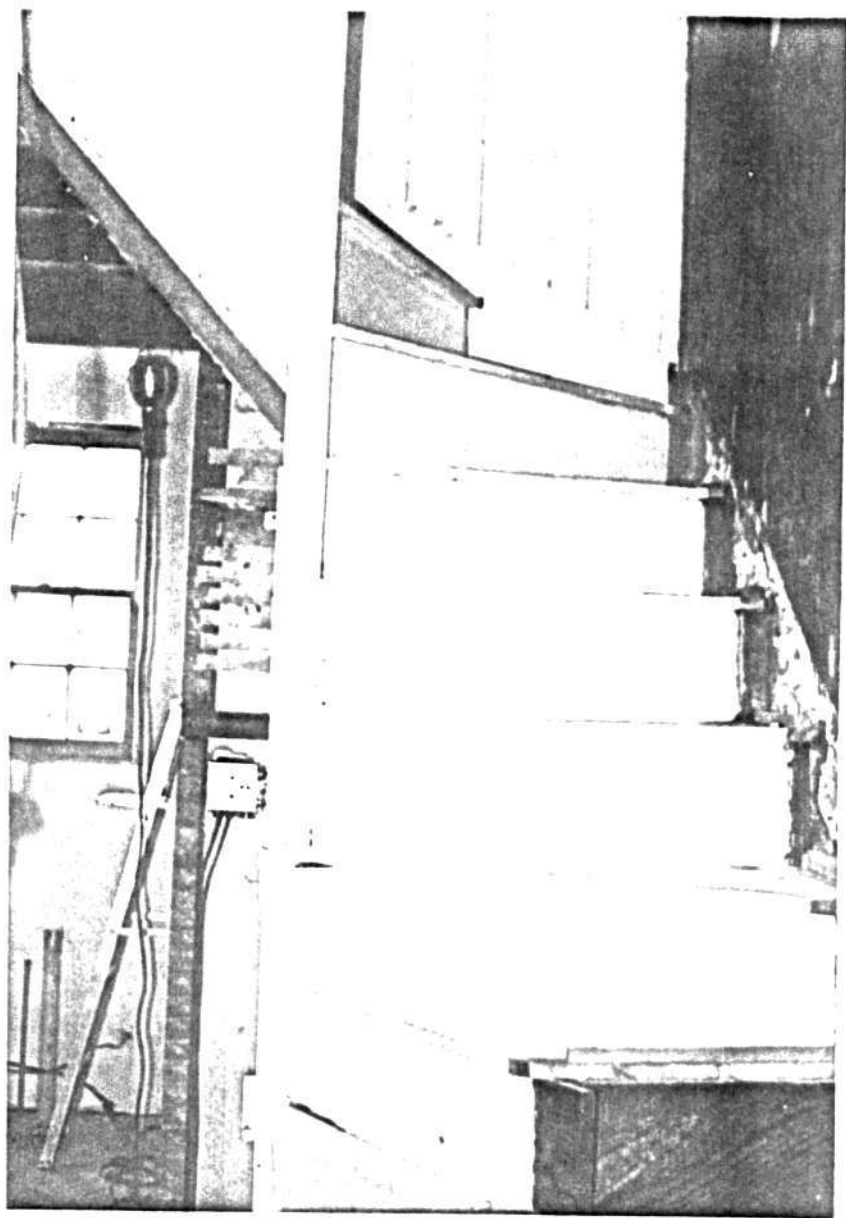
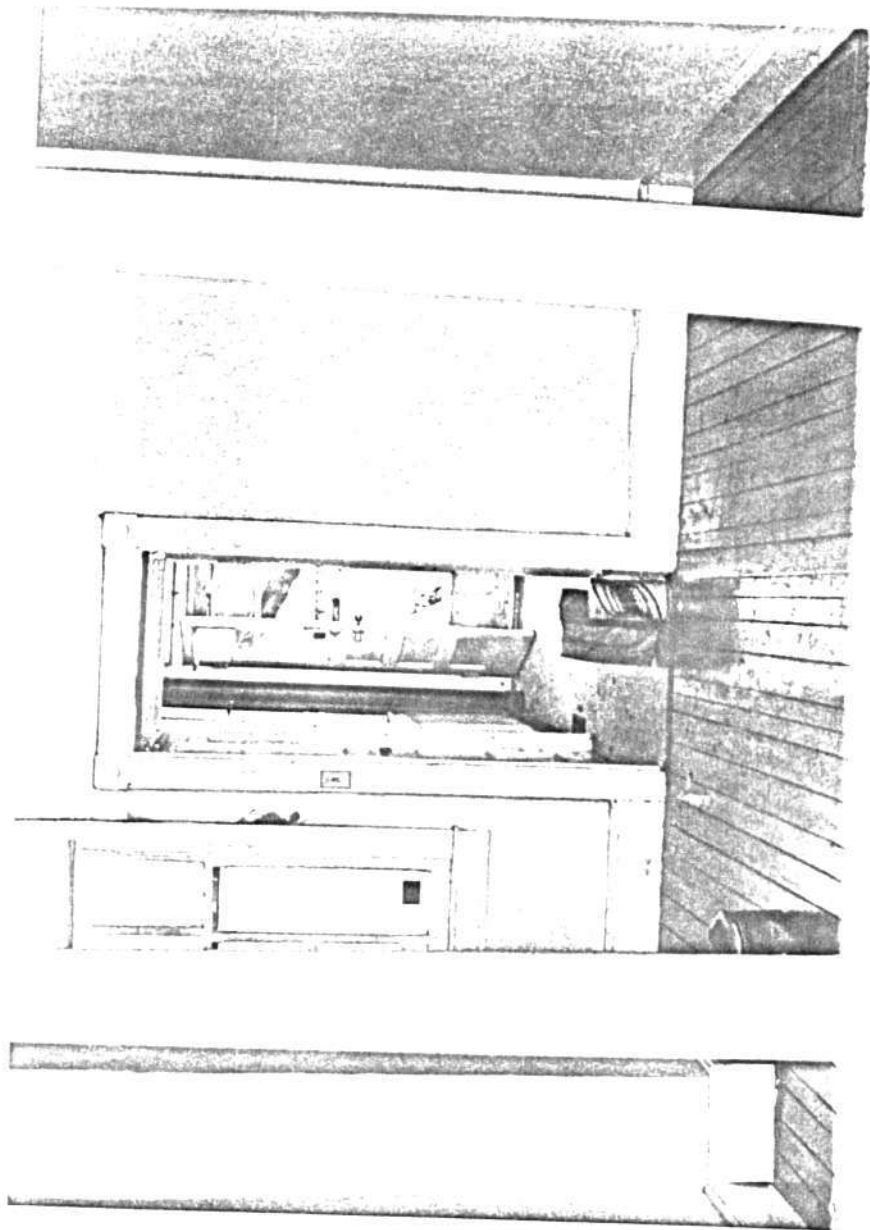
#3 of 7

4

Douglass Place B-3694
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore, MD 21231
Douglass Place, rear ells

#4 of 7

B-3694

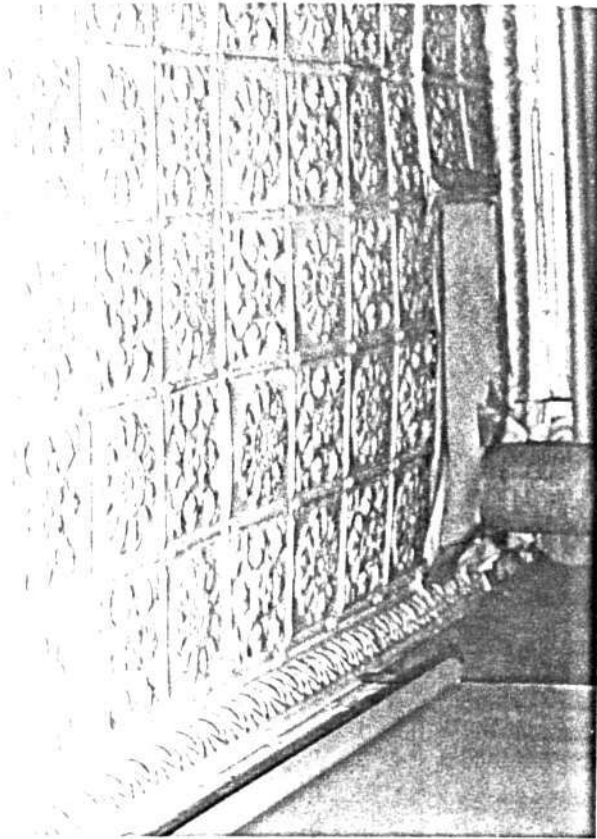


5

Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore MD 21231
520 S. Dallas St., typical interior trim,
view from living room into dining room
#5 of 7 (facing west)

6

Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas St., Baltimore, MD 21231
520 S. Dallas St., typical winder stair to
second story
#6 of 7



7

Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland
Photographer: Kerry L. Stanley, March 1983
Negatives with photographer
520 S. Dallas, St., Baltimore, MD 21231
520 S. Dallas Street, tin ceiling in second-
floor bathroom
#7 of 7

B-3694

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. ~~B-4734~~

B-3694

1. Name

Historic 516 - 524 South Dallas Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 516 - 524 South Dallas Street
city, town Baltimore
state & zip code Maryland 21205 county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name
street & number telephone
city, town state & zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title
date federal state county local
depository for survey records
city, town state & zip code

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

B-3694
Survey No. ~~B-4734~~

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check One

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

☒ original site
☐ moved:
date of move: _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This row of five two-story, two-bay wide vernacular Renaissance Revival-style brick houses with shed roofs and sheet metal cornices were built in 1892-1893 by Frederick Douglass late in his life as a speculative housing investment in Fells Point. Four of the houses retain their original brick facades, which were originally painted a dark red, with the basement area painted white to imitate the marble basements of more expensive houses. One has been covered with formstone.

After the use of wood was outlawed for cornices in 1892, sheet metal became the predominant material used. By the early years of the 20th century, the most popular form of sheet metal cornice sported ball finials and often classical motifs like swags pressed into the frieze area. Generally, only main street two story houses had decorated friezes-the builder saved money on his small street versions by eliminating them. Likewise, while the main street houses in this style would have marble basements, stringers, lintels, and steps, builders used no marble at all on their small street versions, painting the basements white instead. Main street houses would have stained glass transoms over both the door and the wide first floor window; on the small streets builders offered stained glass only in the door transom.

The houses are two stories in height, range in width from 12'1" to 11'3" and occupy lots 60' deep. Each house is three small rooms deep and there is no backbuilding. The houses are constructed in running bond and were originally painted. Each house has a single hooded chimney located near the front and rear of the house. The shed roof is capped by a continuous sheet metal cornice consisting of a crown molding framed by two end brackets with arched tops that rise above the roofline and a horizontally grooved lower portion. The brackets connect to a lower molding strip, thus forming a plain brick frieze area.

The door and window openings have segmentally arched brick lintels, with scroll-sawn tympanums. The sills are wood. Doorways had stained glass transoms marked with the house number, several of which survive. No original doors survive. The houses sit on fairly high basements lit by a single-or double-light sash, set beneath a single-header segmental arch, also with a scroll-sawn tympanum. Each front door is reached by four or five brick or concrete steps.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

B-3694
 Survey No. ~~B-4734~~

8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates c. 1893

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This group of houses has major significance as being built by Frederick Douglass, the Maryland-born internationally famous abolitionist, who grew up in Talbot County as a slave and lived for some years in Fells Point before escaping from slavery and later becoming an ardent spokesperson for the anti-slavery movement. At the end of his life Douglass was settled in Highland Beach, a resort area south of Annapolis he helped create for African-American families. Why he decided to speculate in Fells Point real estate is unknown, but in 1892 he purchased land from the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Dallas Street Station and built a very up-to-date row of small houses for the rental market. The houses only remained in the Douglass family for a few years. Frederick Douglass died in a few years and his heirs promptly sold the houses to a group of local investors.

The houses are additionally significant as representing the very last type of small street houses to be built, in the period c. 1905 - 1909, when a new city ordinance outlawed building houses on streets less than 40' wide. The rest of the block had a mix of two-and-a-half story, two-story-and-attic, and two-story gable-roofed houses, built between the early 1820s and the early 1850s, but Douglass was able to secure this small parcel of land for building houses late in the century because it had been owned by the church. The new houses therefore must have been desirable rentals in the area. Similar houses sold in their period for \$700 - \$750, but would rent for only \$8 or so a month. In this way people who couldn't afford the purchase price of the small street houses, *could* afford to rent one, while they saved to be able to buy their own home later. By the 1890s Fells Point had become the center of the Polish community in Baltimore, so it is likely that newly arrived Polish immigrants rented the houses from Douglass. According to contemporary newspaper reports such families often took in boarders to make ends meet, so the small houses would have been crowded, but also saved diligently to eventually become homeowners.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. **B-3694**
~~B-4734~~

9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date June 2000

telephone

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of rights.

Return to:

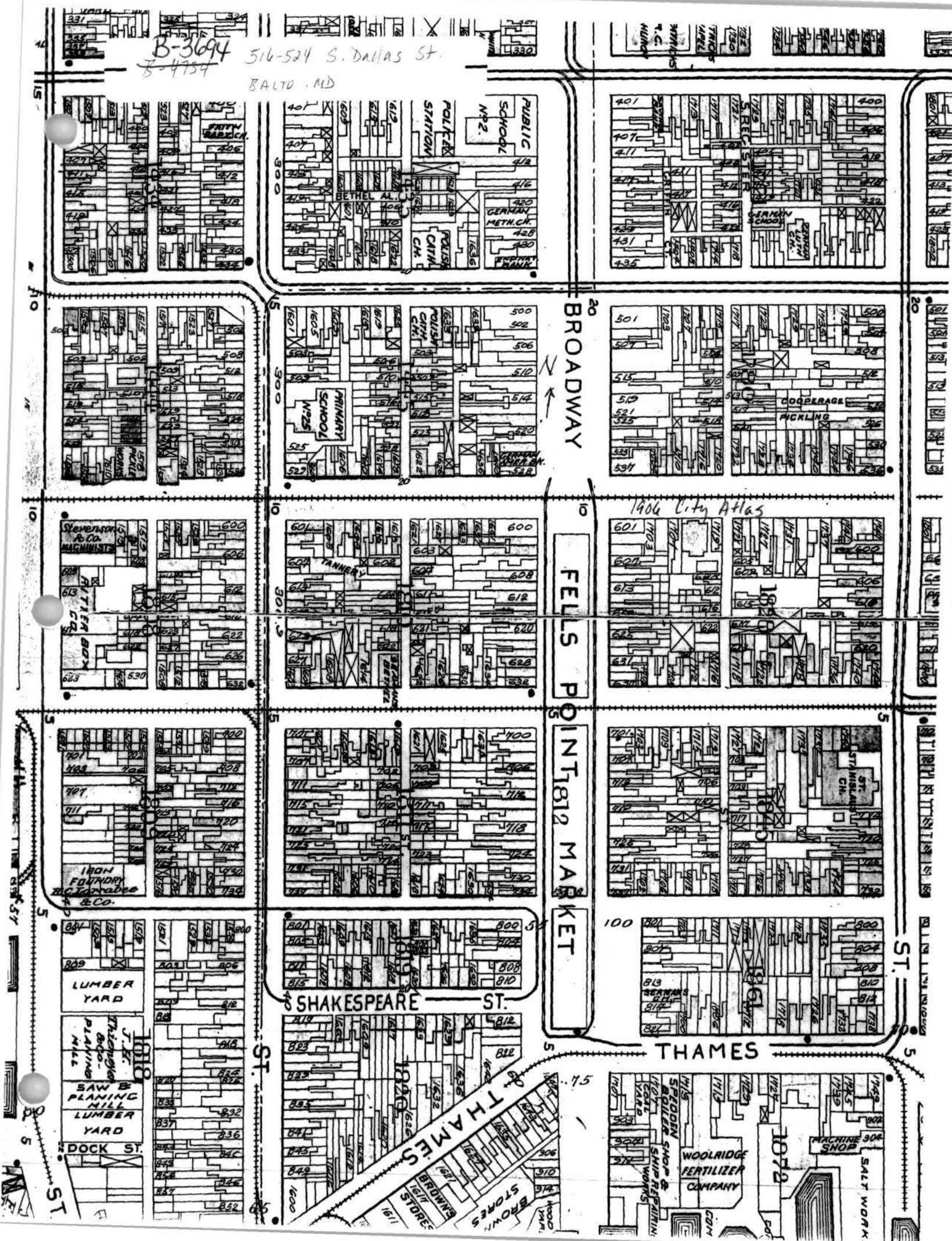
DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

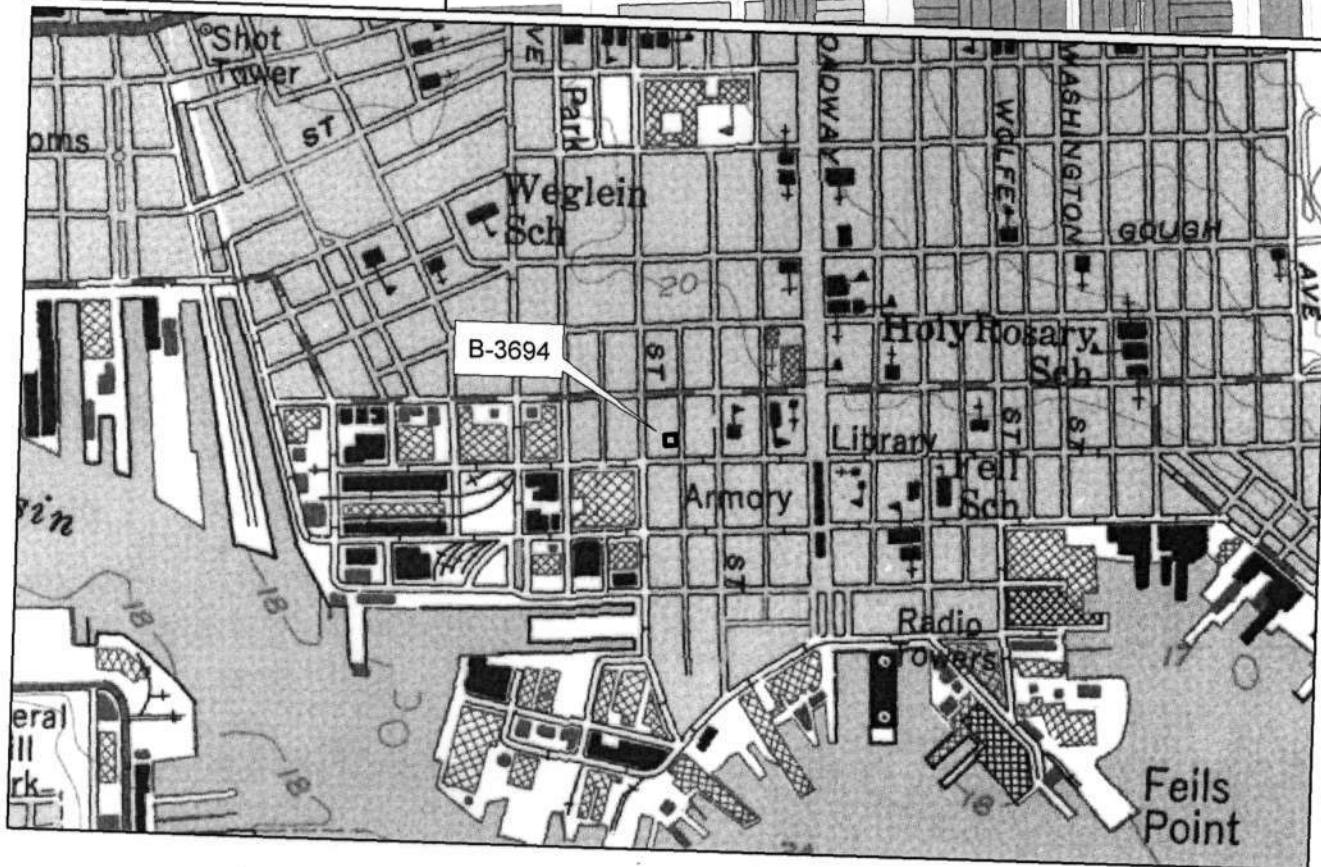
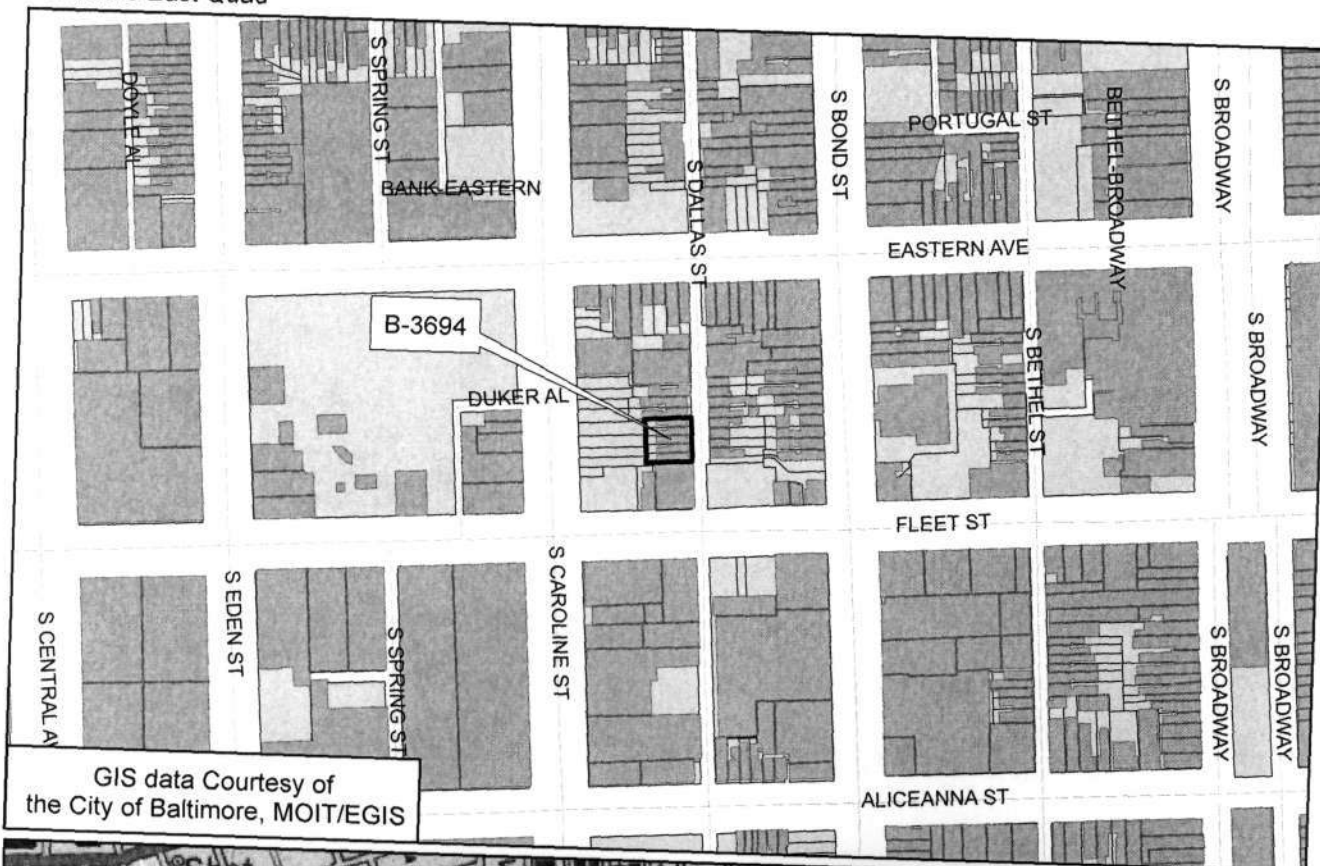
100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

BALTO, MD



B-3694
Douglass Place
516-524 S. Dallas Street
Block 1444 Lots 067-071
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad





516-524 S. Dallas

~~B-4734~~ B-3694

516-524 S. Dallas 84

BACTO. MD

C. Belfiore

11/97

100

[14]401 0211 H H H 1 2

ML SHPO

1/2



570 S. Dallas

~~B-4734~~ B-3694

570 S. Dallas St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belgrave

14 4-

2/2

100401 0211 1111 11